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THE CHURCH, THE PULPIT, AND THE GOSPEL.

MR. YOUNG'S DISCOURSE

AT THE ORDINATION OF

REV. GEORGE E. ELLIS,

WITH THE

CHARGE, RIGHT-HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

AND THE

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE.

THE CHURCH, THE PULPIT, AND THE GOSPEL.

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DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE ORDINATION

OF THE

REV. GEORGE EDWARD ELLIS,

AS PASTOR OF THE

HARVARD CHURCH, IN CHARLESTOWN,

MARCH 11, 1840.

BY ALEXANDER YOUNG,

MINISTER OF THE CHURCH ON CHURCH GREEN, BOSTON.

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DISCOURSE.

I CORINTHIANS, I. 17.

CHRIST SENT ME NOT TO BAPTIZE, BUT TO PREACH THE GOSPEL: NOT WITH WISDOM OF WORDS, LEST THE CROSS OF CHRIST SHOULD BE MADE OF NONE EFFECT.

It would be an ungenerous and unwarrantable inference from this declaration of the Apostle Paul, to assert that he lightly esteemed the ordinance here mentioned, and looked with contempt upon the ceremonial part of religion. I will not deny that the words are susceptible of this extravagant interpretation ; since it is of the very nature of human language, and perhaps a necessary imperfection, that it is intrinsically ambiguous, and admits of a variety of senses. But the question here, and in all similar cases of doubtful and disputed signification, is not what meaning the words will possibly bear, — not what absurdity may be thrust upon them, or what ingenious paradox may be wrung out of them. — but what is the sense which we may fairly and reasonably suppose the Apostle put upon them, — bearing in mind, as we ought, the knowledge we have of his views and sentiments on this and collateral sub-

jects, as expressed in other parts of his writings. Now, judging from these considerations, we can have no hesitation, I think, in pronouncing that he is here speaking not absolutely, but relatively. He would not denounce or depreciate the ritual, but he would eulogize and extol the spiritual functions of his apostleship. He would not disparage baptism, but he would magnify the preaching of the word. He would give to each of these offices its place, recognize in each its use, and ascribe to each its importance. It is apparent, moreover, from his own statement in the verses immediately preceding the text, that he had not neglected the administration of this ordinance, since he mentions the names of several whom he had personally baptized; but it is no less evident that he regarded preaching as his appropriate and paramount vocation. He himself, we know, was baptized after his miraculous conversion; and there can be no doubt, I think, from the statements and allusions scattered through the book of Acts and his Epistles, that all who were converted by his preaching, were admitted to the privileges of discipleship by this initiatory rite of our religion, although Paul did not baptize them with his own hands, (as Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) but employed others to perform this ministerial office; for Christ sent this eminent and gifted Apostle, this "chosen vessel," as he is called, not so much to baptize, as to preach the Gospel.

Availing myself of a topic suggested by the text, I propose, in the present discourse, to point out the positive use and the relative worth of the ritual institutions

and the intellectual ministrations of Christianity. The Church and the Pulpit — I shall aim to portray the distinct importance and the concurrent influence of these two divinely appointed means of religious culture and spiritual growth ; and in conclusion I shall indicate the sources of that Gospel which they are alike designed to express and uphold.

I. I remark, in the first place, that there is a foundation in our nature for the outward, the ceremonial, the symbolical part of religion. We have a complex nature. We are not, as some would fain have us believe, altogether spiritual beings, mere ethereal essences. The spirit of man is enveloped with a clay covering ; “ the immortal mind hath her mansion in this fleshly nook.” It looks abroad and holds converse with the outward world through the windows and doors of its earthy tenement. It shares the infirmities, and is affected by the changes, of the corporeal substance with which it is temporarily united ; and it is also capable of being elevated, excited and warmed by the perception of objects addressed to the senses. The religious sentiment, in common with the other parts of our intellectual and moral nature, partakes of this susceptibility to external impressions. Whose soul is not raised in adoration by the sight of the grand and the beautiful in the scenery of the outward universe ? Who can gaze without an emotion of religious awe, in Alpine solitudes, at the everlasting mountains shooting up their snowy peaks and granite needles, and pointing, as with a finger, to the Being who made them ? Who can look without

a devout feeling upon the world-renowned works of art, that dimly shadow forth upon the canvass the memorable passages of our Saviour's eventful life? Who can listen without an elevation of soul to the productions of the great masters of divine harmony, as their strains come swelling upon the ear, through the long-drawn aisle, from the pealing organ and the cathedral chant, and are reverberated from the groined arches and fretted roof of some venerable abbey? Who has ever spent a Sabbath in the choir of York minster or attended high mass beneath the dome of St. Peter's, and not felt his soul lifted up by the spirit of the place, and by the august sights and solemn sounds that addressed his eye and ear? What heart can help being touched by the associations of the scene and the recollections of the hallowed spot, by the memory of the sainted dead, confessors and martyrs, whose ashes repose in the vaults beneath and in the cloisters around?

Yes, we are so constituted as to be religiously impressed by solemn sights and sounds, especially if they are presented to us in holy places and at sacred seasons, with all the gathered influences of hoary antiquity upon them. So natural and universal a feeling is this, that one of the chief sources of the corruption of spiritual religion is to be found in the excess to which the use of outward symbols has been carried. This has always been the tendency in all the religions of human origin — a disposition to rely on the instrument, to rest in the verbal expression, to substitute the form for the sentiment of devotion, and to make outward magnificence and show atone for inward reverence and worship. It

is not to be denied, that this has been the case also in the administration of Christianity, and that even now, in some churches, Protestant as well as Catholic, the ritual prevails to the injury of the spiritual, and religion is overlaid by a heap of forms and ceremonies.

Yet, notwithstanding the abuses to which it is confessedly liable, it is none the less true that sensible worship has its use, as an instrument and aid to internal devotion. By a well known law of our nature, not only is the religious sentiment strengthened and deepened by its utterance and profession, but the devotional feeling is reciprocally suggested and revived by the places and scenes and associated circumstances in which it has usually been experienced and expressed.

Our Saviour appears to have regarded the ritual of religion in its true light, and to have assigned to it its proper place. He not only kept the Passover and the other festivals of his nation, — he not only frequented the Temple and the synagogue, and submitted to the baptism of John, in common with his countrymen, — thus giving the weight of his example to existing religious observances, and thereby indirectly confirming them; but, by directing his Apostles to baptize the converts to his new religion and by instituting the Festival of Remembrance, he gave a positive and unequivocal sanction to the propriety and importance of rites and ceremonies. The course which our Saviour adopted in this respect evinces a wisdom truly divine, and merits a place among the collateral and subsidiary proofs of his heavenly mission. Living at a time when in his own country, and in all the surrounding nations, the

ceremonial of religion had usurped and absorbed the spiritual, — beholding, as he did, the magnificence of the Temple service,

“ Their ever-smoking altars, white-robed priests,
And all the pride of gorgeous sacrifice,”—

observing as he must, the minds of the people engrossed by the outward pomp and pageantry, to the neglect of the inward purification, he was not led, on the one hand, to adopt the prevailing practices, and aim to win over converts to his plain and uninviting religion by engrafting on it the splendid and imposing ceremonies of Jewish worship, so dear to the Hebrew heart ; nor, on the other hand, did he, in that spirit of reckless and radical opposition so common in reformers, utterly abjure and proscribe what he clearly saw was useful, though he perceived it was capable of perversion and abuse. By giving his sanction to but two simple ordinances, he at the same time condemned the multiplicity and parade of the Jewish and Pagan ceremonies, and gave his testimony in favor of some outward and sensible forms in religious worship.

The experience of two thousand years has proved the wisdom of this course. The ordinances of the Gospel have, in every age, been its abiding monuments, by which it has been made perceptible to an unreflecting and sensual world, and been handed down from one generation to another. They have lifted up a standard to the people. In periods of civilization and intelligence they have been a pillar of cloud by day, and in seasons of barbarism and ignorance they

have been a pillar of fire by night. In that long, dreary night of the middle ages, when Christendom was overshadowed by a thicker than Egyptian darkness, what would have become of the Gospel without these visible symbols of its existence and character? At that time even the light *within* was darkness; and how great was that darkness! Spiritual truth had vanished. All intellectual exercises were suspended. Thought itself was at a stand. The Bible was thrown into dark corners and forgotten. The monk could hardly spell the words of the books which he so industriously copied. The priest did not preach the Gospel, whose records he could not read. And Christianity might have disappeared as a religious institution, had it not been for those simple memorials, with which the devotional feelings of the people were identified. These existed when nothing else of the Gospel remained. They kept alive the memory of it when nothing else could. They expressed it in a visible form. They gave it "a local habitation and a name." They enshrined it in the affections of an undiscerning and unspiritual multitude. They spoke to the outward eye when the inward eye was eclipsed that it could not see. In this way the latent spark of religion was kept smouldering on the altar until there was enough of the breath of spiritual life to fan the flame and kindle the sacrifice. Thus was Christianity preserved and transmitted, until the fit time arrived for it to come forth from the cloister and the cell, and mingle again in the walks of the busy world as a living and life-giving principle.

The Church, with its solemn services and ordi-

nances, has always been and still is, "the pillar and ground of the truth." How long would the spirit of piety be kept alive in this community without our weekly gatherings in the Christian temple and our stated assemblings around the table of Communion? The Church is the nucleus about which the religious sentiment of the people forms and grows. It is the gravitating point to which Christian piety tends, and around which devotion revolves and burns. It is the central sun of our religious system, which at the same time that it regulates the motions of all dependent hearts; imparts to all a cheering light and an invigorating warmth. It is the Church that gives stability and permanency to Christianity as a religious institution. Abolish the Church, and you will soon abolish public worship altogether. Jesus Christ, it should be remembered, instituted preaching, but he appointed no Sabbath, no particular season of worship. For the blessed privilege of a day of religious worship we are indebted to the ordinances of the Church, which, in the early ages, were the principal occasions that called the disciples together, and at which times "the Apostles' doctrine" accompanied "the breaking of bread and the prayers."

How long, think you, would Christianity continue to flourish on the hill-sides and in the valleys of New England, if the ordinances were discontinued, the Church dissolved, and public prayers were no longer offered up statedly in holy places? Many of the churches planted by our pious forefathers have existed now for more than two hundred years, and have been, in every generation, fountains of spiritual blessings and centres of

intellectual and moral light. Would they have remained to this day, if they had been mere chance gatherings, like our modern popular lectures, where the inhabitants of a village met occasionally to listen to the last startling novelty or paradox that had been broached in theology? No. Popular harangues, even on religious subjects, without the Church, without prayer, without the Scriptures, without the ordinances, would not have sustained these Christian assemblies so long. These institutions are the ark of our faith. When they are given up, the spirit of piety will languish and decline. When public prayer ceases to be offered, public religious instruction will not last much longer. Where there is not devotion enough left in a community to make supplications and thanksgivings to Almighty God, there will be little disposition to listen to men's sermons and homilies. There will be no regular, stated, systematic instruction in morals and religion. Preaching will degenerate into a mere casual lecture, held whenever some straggling fanatic happens to come along, to impose upon an unenlightened and credulous populace. No, it is the Church, with its rites, and liturgies, and lessons, and hymns, and anthems, which elevates preaching above all other modes of address, encompasses it with reverence and solemnity, and gives to it stability and effect.

II. But, on the other hand, the Church, with its homage and worship, with its venerable usages and hallowed associations, would be imperfect and incomplete without the Preaching of the Gospel. "That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good," says the

Scripture. The intellect needs to be instructed in the facts and truths of religion, as well as the heart to be warmed and moved by spiritual exercises. It craves light on this subject as well as on every other, and requires culture and enlargement. Without sound religious knowledge there is danger of the mind running into superstition, or mysticism, or fanaticism. The truths of Christianity are not instinctive or intuitive, and consequently are to be derived and communicated from one mind to another. They are to be learnt, and therefore they are to be taught. And as the great mass of mankind are engaged in the necessary and engrossing concerns of business and active life, these truths are not to be imparted once for all, but are to be presented again and again, in their various aspects and bearings, and urged with an earnest repetition upon the mind and conscience.

Our Saviour, who "knew what was in man," seems fully to have understood this intellectual and moral want of our nature, and to have justly appreciated the use and efficacy of the spoken word. Accordingly, when he first commissioned the twelve disciples, he sent them forth not to pray, but to "*preach*"; and his parting injunction to them was, not only to baptize, but to "*teach* all nations." Christian Preaching then is not a thing of human device, but an institution of divine appointment, established by the Great Teacher himself, and illustrated and adorned by his own persuasive example, particularly in that most comprehensive of discourses, the ever-memorable Sermon on the Mount. Yes, the preachers of the Gospel are "the servants of the Most High God, who show unto their brethren the way of salvation."

It is a fact worthy of particular notice in this connexion, that the institution of Preaching is peculiar to Christianity, or at least is shared by it only with Judaism. "We find not in the world," says the judicious Hooker, "any people that have lived altogether without religion. And yet *this* duty of religion, which provideth that publicly all sorts of men may be instructed in the fear of God, is to the Church of God and hath been always so peculiar, that none of the heathens, how curious soever in searching out all kinds of outward ceremonies like to ours, could ever once so much as endeavour to resemble *herein* the Church's care for the endless good of her children."

We can conceive of no mode that could have been devised better suited than Preaching to diffuse and perpetuate the Gospel. There is no way of communicating truth and impressing it upon the mind and heart to be compared in efficacy with speech. There is no instrument of conviction and persuasion so powerful as the human voice. There is something insinuating and winning in its mere sounds and tones. There is music, there is magic often, in its very notes and accents, though spoken or sung in a foreign tongue, not a syllable of which we understand. There is a stirring power in words spoken face to face, that you will seek for in vain in the written leaf or the printed volume. There is a peculiar, indescribable effect in utterance, when the speaker confronts the hearer, when eye meets eye, and the living voice flows in a full stream into the waiting and watchful ear. What is said seems a reality, a conviction, a felt truth, something quite different from

what is inscribed with voiceless characters on the dull, dead page.

Again, what better method could have been devised for giving full effect to this institution of Preaching, than the practice, which prevails throughout Christendom, of collecting together at short intervals and on set days the whole population of town and country in consecrated buildings, — the old and the young, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, — to be addressed on their common duties, destinies and hopes, and to be instructed in the will of God and in the great principles of his revealed truth? How different must be the effect of thus spending the Lord's Day from a solitary, silent reading of the Scriptures at home. The spirit of sympathy, which pervades all masses of men, leads them to embrace more readily what is addressed to them all in common. The word passes in an instant, like the electric shock, from one to another, throughout the whole circle. The beaming countenance, the heaving bosom, the melting eye, the suppressed sob, all tell that the preacher has not spoken in vain. They declare that he has touched the delicate chord of religious sensibility in the human heart; and the chord which thus readily responds in an individual's breast, by the magic of sympathy vibrates through the congregation.

"Observe," it has been beautifully said, "observe how coldly that printed page is read, and when laid down, the man turns to another subject at once. But when Buckminster spoke it in a crowded church, every man and woman grew pale and trembled, and it haunted them in their dreams. Yonder volume is accounted

dull, and few can be induced to turn over its pages. But when Whitefield uttered its contents in the churches and on the hill-sides of Old England and New England, the two continents were shaken, and thousands who heard him are still living in old age to have their hearts throb at its memory. And so the pulse of religious life is kept beating, Sabbath after Sabbath, by discourses eagerly and devoutly attended, which no one would bear to read if they were printed. Nay multitudes throng to hear, and are saved by hearing, the living preacher, who could not be persuaded to open for habitual instruction the most eloquent religious works that earth has ever produced.” *

Christ therefore manifested his divine wisdom, and his intimate and deep acquaintance with the constitution of man, when he sent forth living heralds to proclaim and propagate his truth. He himself, we know, travelled about on foot continually through Galilee and Judea, “teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom ;” and we can judge of the power and success with which he preached, from the simple facts recorded by the Evangelists, that “the common people heard him gladly ;” “that the people were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority ;” and that the officers sent to take him, returned with their purpose unaccomplished, assigning as the only reason why they had not brought him, “Never man spake like this man.”

* Dr. Henry Ware, Jr’s. Discourse on the duty of promoting Christianity by the circulation of Books.

“ How sweetly flowed the Gospel’s sound
 From lips of gentleness and grace,
 When listening thousands gathered round,
 And joy and reverence filled the place !

From heaven he came, of heaven he spoke,
 To heaven he led his followers’ way ;
 Dark clouds of gloomy night he broke,
 Unveiling an immortal day.”

O what a blessed privilege it must have been to listen to the public discourses of this Great Teacher and Prophet, or to sit in private at his feet, as the favored Mary did, and catch the gracious words as they fell from his lips !

Jesus, I repeat it, displayed his wisdom in confiding in the spoken word, issuing from the lips of living teachers. He did not tell his Apostles to write, but to preach the Gospel. He himself composed no book. He committed no thought to paper. We have not a line that proceeded from his pen. And we are sometimes disposed to regret this, and to fancy how much we should have prized a single sentence which we were convinced had been traced by his finger. But why should we prize it more than the words which he spake, words which were treasured up by his constant hearers in a grateful and faithful memory, and have been handed down to us in a genuine and unimpeachable record ?

It is a mistake, I think, into which some denominations of Christians have fallen, to suppose that Prayer is the chief, if not the sole object of our assembling in the church on the Lord’s Day, and that Preaching is an

incidental and comparatively an unimportant thing. This appears to me to be an erroneous theory, built on a partial and one-sided view of the design and uses of our public religious meetings. The instructions of the Pulpit seem to me a constituent and essential part of the service, as much so as the devotional exercises. Our prayers we can offer at all times and in all places, under the cope of heaven, and in the walks of busy life. We can offer them at home every day of our lives; and it can hardly be doubted that the most sincere, fervent, and effectual petitions, are those which are breathed in the retirement of the household, in the secret chamber, in the solitude of the closet, when we are alone with God, and pour forth the spontaneous and earnest supplications of our souls, it may be "with strong crying and tears." The flame of piety might perhaps be still kept burning, dimly at least, on the domestic and private altar, even were it not kept alive by the breath of public sympathy. But what substitute is there for the Pulpit? How could we dispense with the Preaching of the Word? What means of general religious instruction could we adopt in its place? I grant, we might still have the truths and doctrines of the Gospel; for the Bible, thank God, is in every family, and in every one's hands. But would it be read, I ask, with the same interest and frequency that it now is, were not attention called to it every week by the stated discourses from the Pulpit, which are founded upon it as their text, and which, in a broader or narrower range, are virtually nothing but its interpretation or enforcement? For one I should trem-

ble for the Bible and for Christianity, were Preaching universally done away with. When the book was read, and the question was put, "Understandest thou what thou readest? the embarrassed reader might reply, "How can I except some man should guide me?" He would often be led to ask, "Of whom speaketh the Prophet or Evangelist this?" and he would desire some Philip "to open his mouth, and begin at the same Scripture, and preach unto him Jesus." At the present day, as well as in the time of the Apostle, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." And the question is still a pertinent one, "How shall they hear without a Preacher?"

We must have then not only public worship, but public religious instruction and exhortation. We want not only priests, but teachers, — not only prayers, but preaching. They are a mutual support and aid. They cannot be divorced; neither can be spared. Prayer, with the ordinances, and the lessons of Scripture, and the spiritual songs, is required to give solemnity and authority to the Pulpit; and Preaching is required to render the service of the Church a reasonable, an intelligible, and an edifying service. "Thus" in the language of Fuller, "the faithful minister compounds all controversies betwixt God's ordinances, by praising them all, practising them all, and thanking God for them all."

If the view that has now been taken be correct, there is no ground to apprehend — as has sometimes been predicted by those who "imagine a vain thing" — that the world will by-and-by outgrow the Gospel, or that the time will ever come, when Preaching will be

laid aside, and the lyceum be substituted for the Pulpit, and the lecture-room for the Church. The experience of more than three hundred years has shown that even the Press, the most formidable rival that the Pulpit has ever had, does not render it unnecessary or ineffective. Far from it. They are fast friends and mutual aids. The Press furnishes, in the printed book, the preliminary and subsidiary knowledge by which the congregation are prepared to understand and be edified by the instructions of the Pulpit; and the Pulpit, on the other hand, by exciting and stimulating the mind, disposes the hearer to seek for additional light in the pages of the printed volume. No, they are not antagonists, but coadjutors; and they will continue to coöperate in providing spiritual aliment for the soul. The sermon and the book, reading and preaching, will go together the world over, and will subsist as long as the Church lasts; and that we know is "founded on a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

III. Now if preaching be such an instrument of power, such an efficient means of moral and religious influence, it is of the utmost importance that it be wielded rightly and discreetly, in the propagation of correct views and just sentiments. To the question then, What is the Christian minister sent to preach? the text distinctly replies, He is sent to preach the Gospel. From this I infer

1. That he is not sent to preach himself — not to set up his intuitions and instincts as revelations of spiritual truth, nor his impulses and impressions as rules of

moral duty. As “no prophecy is of private interpretation,” so no doctrine of religion is of private revelation. The age of special inspiration is past; and the few who in these latter days pretend to divine illumination, and maintain that they too can vaticinate, deliver such poor prophecies and utter such dark oracles, that it requires a much greater stretch of faith to credit their claims than to believe in the miracles which they impugn. Their gleams and flashes of light serve only to reveal the degree and extent of the surrounding gloom. Were this course generally pursued, there would be as many different Gospels as there are preachers. Christianity would be whatever any man’s fancy or folly might conceive, and baptize with that name. The idea of Christianity, as a peculiar and special revelation, would be lost, and its value, as an authoritative rule of faith and conduct, would be annihilated. There would in fact be no further need of the Gospel. Every man’s consciousness would be his Gospel; and the passions and feelings of the moment, undisciplined and unsanctified as they might be, would be the standard of right and the rule of action.

2. The minister of Christ is not sent to preach human philosophy — the speculations and theories of gifted but uninspired men — men who had no authority to assert facts relating to the spiritual world and the life everlasting — who pretended to no such authority, — or, if they did, produced no credentials to authenticate their pretensions. Many individuals have appeared in various ages, and in different parts of the globe, remarkable for their sagacity and wisdom, and ven-

erable for their moral worth, who have uttered profound sayings, and lived virtuous and exemplary lives. Pythagoras, Zoroaster, Confucius, Socrates, Plato, Swedenborg, are names not to be mentioned without respect, but certainly not to be uttered in the same breath, nor put on the same level, with Paul — far less with Jesus of Nazareth. The distance between them and him is heaven-wide ; and to include them in the same category is no less offensive to good taste than to Christian piety. “God hath given him a name which is above every name ; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” St. Paul gives us a test by which we can distinguish an inspired teacher. “I give you to understand,” says he, “that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, speaketh lightly or irreverently of Jesus.” It is obvious that such an impression may be given by the mere enumeration and position of names in a sentence.

We sometimes hear great things anticipated for religion from the revelations of a higher philosophy ; so that an incautious and credulous mind might almost be led to suppose that by-and-by the world was to be regenerated and souls were to be saved by philosophy, and not by the Gospel, which alone is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” For my own part, as I fear nothing, so I expect nothing, from the alleged or predicted revelations of any new philosophy. I do not believe that Christianity is to receive any serious detriment, or derive any essential benefit, from its vague and evanescent speculations. A new philosophy may, for a while, indeed, corrupt the simplicity which is in

Christ, as has been done, in times gone by, by the old philosophies ; but it will not be able to inflict on it any permanent injury. Judging, however, from the past history of the Christian Church, we certainly have no reason to anticipate any good from the proposed new marriage of religion and philosophy ; and for one, I should not regret to see the banns forbidden and the union prevented. “Both religion and philosophy” says Lord Bacon, “have received and may receive extreme prejudice by being commixed together ; as that which undoubtedly will make an heretical religion, and an imaginary and fabulous philosophy.”

It is a fact which I suppose will not be questioned, that among the various causes which have disturbed the peace and quiet of the Church, the principal place must be assigned to the malign influence of a speculative philosophy. All the great corruptions of Christian truth can be traced back directly to this source. In the infancy of the Church, the Pagan philosophers, on being converted to Christianity, did not lay aside the cloak, but brought with them their subtile and shadowy speculations, and blended them with the simple truth as it is in Jesus. They fancied that by only changing a few terms, they might retain their old philosophy in connexion with their new religion, form a coalition between them, and be at the same time disciples of Plato and followers of Christ. Entering upon the office of Christian teachers under the bias of a strong partiality for Plato and his doctrine, they tintured the minds of their disciples with the same prejudice, and thus disseminated Platonic notions as Chris-

tian truths. Hiding the veriest trifles under high-sounding names, these "bold carpenters of words" boasted of having an esoteric doctrine, a higher and nobler science, which the uninitiated could not receive or understand. This later Platonism, or Eclectic philosophy of the Alexandrian school, was the most prolific and baneful source of theological error, since to it is to be traced the doctrine of the trinity with its kindred tenets. Then the Oriental philosophy, under the guise of Manichæism, with its doctrines of necessity, original sin and predestination, which had been embraced by Augustin previous to his conversion to Christianity, though afterwards professedly abjured, was by him virtually, perhaps unconsciously, engrafted on the Gospel, and at successive periods was revived and perpetuated by the congenial systems of Calvin and Edwards. In the middle ages, the philosophy of Aristotle was the parent of the scholastic philosophy, and this again of the scholastic theology, with its barren disputations and puerile distinctions, among the fruits of which the doctrine of transubstantiation occupies a prominent place. In modern times, the philosophy of Voltaire, and of Diderot and his Encyclopedists, paved the way for the infidelity and atheism of the French Revolution, for the overthrow of the Gallican Church, the prostration of Christian institutions, and, I had well nigh said, for the extinction of the religious sentiment and of the common feelings of humanity in the heart of a whole nation. Last of all, the naturalism, mysticism and pantheism of the present day are regarded by many as the legitimate results of that metaphysical parox-

ysm in Germany, which, in its successive throes and spasms, threw up Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, the profound and subtile masters of the Transcendental philosophy.

In every age of the Church a dogmatical and arrogant philosophy has been the bane of Christianity. The vast majority of the people, possessed of good sense but little learning, have always been disposed to adhere to the plain, obvious truths of the Gospel; whilst these truths have been corrupted and undermined by neologists and sophists, who fancied they had discovered some higher and better views, and affixed to them the name of the Gospel. So that St. Paul had good reason to address to his converts that solemn warning, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

I should not consider it a complete and satisfactory answer to this statement, to say that it was a false philosophy that thus corrupted Christianity. For the question might then be asked, What do you mean by *false* philosophy? and what *is true* philosophy? That is a point which is still mooted, and probably will be till doomsday. The votaries of the science are not yet agreed among themselves, and there is no prospect that they ever will be. From the beginning one system has superseded another in a continuous series, just as one wave pushes forward and buries another on the sea-shore; and the last one that has been constructed, the modern Eclectic, is professedly made up of fragments gathered from the wrecks of all previous systems. The

simple fact that the disciples of speculative philosophy have never yet been able to settle it among themselves what its truths and principles are, and that their views are so discordant, heterogeneous and fluctuating, naturally leads men of plain good sense to doubt whether there be any very great value in their speculations — at least so far as religion is concerned — and makes them feel more than ever the want and the worth of the authoritative declarations and miraculously confirmed truths of Christianity. In fact it was this very uncertainty and variableness of human speculation that rendered a divine revelation necessary. The Gospel has outlived all the systems of human philosophy that have risen up as its antagonists or auxiliaries ; and we therefore confidently believe that it will outlive all that shall hereafter be devised. What indeed has it to fear from a science whose only progress, from Plato to Cousin, has been in a circle ? Speculative philosophy has in that time undergone many changes, and put on many new faces ; but it has made little advance, and its Protean character cannot be concealed. “Where is the sophist ? where is the scribe ? where is the disputer of this world ?” What have they done ? With a few signal exceptions, what have they effected for the good of mankind ? What have they contributed to the stock of human knowledge ? Words — words — words.

Let me not be understood as disparaging philosophy, when keeping within her own province, moving in her proper sphere, and limiting herself to the actual, the attainable, or the possible. I am no Pyrrhonist. I do not look upon the human mind as imbecile or effete. I

cannot but view with deep sympathy her gropings and reachings after truth, and her long and earnest struggles to clear herself from her clogs and emerge into light. I admit the supremacy of reason, though not her omnipotence. I have no quarrel with that inductive philosophy, which, having a clear and distinct idea of the legitimate objects of its researches, derives its results from the *facts* of consciousness, and not from intuitions of the absolute, or the chambers of imagery — which observes the phenomena of thought and emotion, analyzes the mental and moral faculties, and seeks to ascertain the original principles and universal laws of human nature. To such a philosophy there can be no objection. I acknowledge my obligations to Bacon, and Locke, and Reid. To such philosophical writers as Dugald Stewart, Sir James Mackintosh, and Sir William Hamilton, men of clear heads and sound sense, I pay a willing homage. For a sober, experimental, reverential philosophy, thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Jesus, like that of Butler in his *Analogy* and his *Discourses on Human Nature*, I entertain the highest respect. Would that we had more of such books and more Christian philosophers like him !

In what I have said about philosophy, I have had reference solely to her assumptions, bearings, and tone, in regard to revealed religion. Metaphysics, I grant, may be profitably cultivated as a high intellectual pursuit ; and far be it from me to denounce or discourage the study : although the benefit to be derived from it may be found, as in the mathematics, to consist quite as much in the exciting and invigorating exercise of the chase as in the

value of the game run down. The Christian theologian, too, must learn to wield the weapons of philosophy, that he may be able to meet the sappers and miners of Christianity on their own ground, whether they entrench themselves above the surface or burrow beneath. But at the same time let him carefully guard his affections and his religious feelings against its withering and petrifying influence ; for, as Burke says, “nothing can be conceived more hard than the heart of a thoroughbred metaphysician.”

Let philosophy then have her place among the sciences ; but let her not presume to say that she is necessary to uphold the Gospel. It is a virtual, though it may be an unintentional reproach on Christianity, to say that she needs philosophy either as a foundation or a buttress. She requires no such aid ; she declines all such support. “*Non tali auxilio.*” She does not need to be patronized and bolstered up in this way, nor in any way. She is self-sufficient, and all-sufficient, containing in herself the conservative, indestructible elements of her spiritual life. “To seek divinity in philosophy,” says Lord Bacon, “is to seek the living amongst the dead.” For one, I should tremble for the stability of Christianity, were it true that it was dependent on any system of human philosophy ; for I should expect that when the rotten groundwork of that system fell, as fall it probably will, as all its predecessors have done, Christianity too would topple and be buried under its ruins.

For one, I most humbly acknowledge that I do not feel the want of a speculative philosophy to put underneath and shore up my religion. I am not ashamed to

avow that my faith is "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid. Our faith does not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." I cling to revelation, I hold to the record. Without the record of a supernatural faith which I find in the pages of the New Testament, I confess I should feel like the sailor, set adrift on mid ocean, without rudder, compass, or chart — without his quadrant and his Practical Navigator. I turn to the inspired word of Christ, as the needle seeks the polestar. That is spirit, and that is life. I do not regard it as a disputable speculation, but I reverence and embrace it as authoritative truth. The doctrine of a future immortal life and retribution, — which is the great truth of the Gospel, — is the *assertion* of a *fact*. I receive it on the testimony of Jesus, and I believe it because it was asserted by one whose miracles proved that he was sent by God, and declared this fact in his name. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. In thee are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

3. If then the minister of Christ is not to preach himself, his personal intuitions and instincts, nor the theories and speculations of others as uninspired as himself, the question recurs, What is he to preach? I answer again, in the words of the text, He is to preach the Gospel, — that is, he is to preach the spiritual facts and truths which were supernaturally announced to the world by Jesus of Nazareth — facts and truths which the wisest of men, before his advent, had been unable to

discover, with all the lights of reason and philosophy ; and which we have no reason to believe, judging from the progress of philosophical discovery, that the unaided intellect would ever have been able to ascertain and establish. "The world by wisdom knew not God. No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." These things were hid from the wise and prudent. The old heathen sages, it is true, stumbled on some fortunate conjectures, and made some happy guesses ; but they could assert nothing with assurance ; they could not speak with *certainty* and *authority*. "It is idle to say," as Paley well remarks, "that a future state had been discovered already. It had been discovered as the Copernican system was—it was one *guess* among many. He alone discovers who *proves* ; and no man can prove this point but the teacher who testifies by miracles that his doctrine comes from God." No, it was Jesus Christ who "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light."

The Christian minister, then, is to preach the declarations and statements, the doctrines and principles of the Gospel. In his view, religion is identified with Christianity ; and he values Christianity because it gives him assurance of certain truths which he regards as of infinite importance. These truths constitute his religion. And these truths can be both learnt and taught ; as Paul "delivered " to the Corinthians "that which he also received." He is then to learn them before he teaches them. And *how* is he to learn what they are ? Is he to go and inquire of his own conscious-

ness, of some inward light? Certainly not. All our knowledge of Christ and Christianity is derived primarily, not from consciousness or intuition, but from outward revelation. It is not innate, spontaneous and original with us, but extrinsic, derived, superinduced. If we wish to know for the first time what Christianity teaches, or what to think of Christ, we must have recourse not to our own minds, but to the records which tell us distinctly who Christ was, what he did, what he taught, and how he lived. The written word, the evangelical narrative, is an indispensable prerequisite to our having any knowledge at all of the Gospel or of Christ. Historical Christianity is the primary, fundamental form of the religion. Whatever divisions or distinctions you may please to make, this takes precedence of all. Unless we first have this, we can have none beside. All other exhibitions and manifestations of Christianity must be traced back to this, as their origin and source. Philosophical Christianity, as it is called, what existence would it have without the record of the *facts* on which all its speculations and theories are based? And in order to *reproduce* Christianity in the heart, it must have had a prior existence somewhere else. The very term that is used implies as much. Without the Christ of History there would be no type by which the Christ of Consciousness could be remodelled and reproduced.

If an intelligent heathen should come to you and ask to be informed about the nature of Christianity, its distinctive principles and truths, to what would you refer him? Would you send him back to his own

intuitions and instincts? No; for he has appealed to them already, and could get no light, or satisfaction, or comfort, on the points where his mind labored. Would you send him to the schools of ancient or modern philosophy? No; for the former have not a word to say about Christ; and the latter have nothing valuable that they have not stolen or borrowed from the Gospel. You would send him at once to the fountain-head, to the Memoirs of the Evangelists, to the pages of the New Testament — in other words, you would refer him to Historical Christianity.

Jesus Christ is a historical personage; as much so as Charlemagne, Columbus, or Luther. His existence is established by the usual historical proofs. That he lived in Judea, in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, is proved by the authority even of profane authors, such as Tacitus, Suetonius, and the younger Pliny, all of whom mention his name in their writings. And the events of his life, the features of his character, his actions, and his teachings, are handed down to us by genuine and authentic records. Without these we should never have known what he taught, or even that he had lived. In order to ascertain the truth and reality of facts alleged to have happened in remote times, we appeal to the testimony of history — to written documents — to memoirs, journals, annals, chronicles. In regard to our own country we esteem it a fortunate circumstance, a peculiar privilege, that we are able to tell the whole story of the origin of these northern colonies from the contemporary papers of the chief actors therein, still extant — from the Journals of Winthrop and Bradford,

the Relations of Winslow, and the letters of Higginson. In like manner we ascertain the doctrines and tenets of the ancient philosophers — what Socrates taught, what Plato believed, what Aristotle said — from their own writings, or the writings of their disciples, that have come down to us. There is no other way of getting at the facts in the case; and we gratefully accept and employ this way. Why should we hesitate to avail ourselves of the same means in ascertaining what Christianity is? Why should we be slow or scrupulous in using it? Why should we cast doubts upon it? Why should we depreciate it? Why should any one who calls himself a Christian, speak lightly or sneeringly of Historical Christianity?

Christianity is a historical religion, built upon facts and assertions, not upon speculations and conjectures. And this we think constitutes one of its great merits, one of its highest and best peculiarities, and one of its strongest claims to our attention. We trace back our religion, by an unbroken chain of historical testimonies, through two thousand years, to the very hour and spot where Christ taught as one having authority, and spake as never man spake before or since. We esteem it a singular advantage, that we have an authentic account of “all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, even as they delivered them unto us which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, so that we may know the *certainty* of those things wherein we have been instructed.” We are not now compelled to rely

on vague conjecture or uncertain speculation. We are not obliged to imagine and guess what our Saviour might perhaps have done in a critical emergency, or what he might have said in answer to some pregnant question, like that of the Jewish lawyer, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" We are not driven to fashion for ourselves, or to speculate as to what would have been, the very best possible Gospel.

Christ manifested his profound wisdom in not selecting for the first heralds of his truth subtile and erudite men, full of their own speculations and theories. He took those whose minds were not preoccupied with philosophy or science, falsely so called; men who were docile and humble, and were willing to receive and teach what he *told* them—a simple and plain doctrine. Such men could not corrupt the doctrine even if they would. If Christ had needed philosophers to preach the Gospel, he could have found enough of them in that disputatious age. But he chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.

It is worthy of remark, that the Apostles of our Lord, Peter, Paul, and the rest of that "glorious company," preached Historical Christianity, and not their own private notions and philosophies. We do not find that even the acute and erudite Paul, though brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and versed in all the learning and philosophy of his times, ever preached them as a substitute or varnish for that Gospel which he had received by immediate revelation from his Master. He considered that revelation as sufficient, authoritative, ultimate,

superseding all theory and foreclosing all speculation. He says expressly in the text that he did not preach "with wisdom of words," that is, in the artful and ornate language of the sophists of his time, who darkened counsel by words without knowledge; and in this and the following chapters of the Epistle he reminds his Corinthian converts again and again that he had not preached to them a subtle human philosophy.

The Apostles went abroad, and repeated wherever they went a plain, unadorned statement of facts, of which they had been eye-witnesses, respecting the life and instructions, the labors and sacrifices of their Lord. Their preaching was almost entirely a biography of Jesus, accompanied by the argument that he was the Christ, the predicted Messiah, and by the doctrine of the remission of sins on repentance. His resurrection from the dead was the prominent doctrine which they announced — and this was a historical fact. It is apparent, too, from the Book of the Acts, that the early heralds of the cross preached a *traditional* Christianity, that had been drawn wholly from memory or hearsay, and was not yet even committed to writing; for the Gospels were not written till about thirty years after the death of Christ. Now if the Apostles did not think it beneath them to preach Historical Christianity, their humble successors need not feel themselves above it. If it was not "beggarly elements" to them, we ought not so to regard or call it. If they did not feel the want of a higher philosophy, a more sublimated religion, than is contained in the New Testament, why should we grope and strain after it?

Once give up Historical Christianity, under the pretence that a new revelation is needed ; once admit that the New Testament does not contain all the principles of spiritual truth, and that an appeal to its pages concerning any alleged article of religion is not determinate and conclusive, and you open the door to all sorts of loose and crude speculations. The Gospel will then be whatever any one's imagination or philosophy may please to make it. It may be composed of such stuff as dreams are made of, airy and unsubstantial nothings — or of unmeaning propositions and incoherent rhapsodies — or of impious and blasphemous extravagancies, — all baptized with the abused name of Christianity. Once depart from the record, and you are driven from your moorings, and tost upon a dark and troubled sea.

Let the Church then stand, “the pillar and ground of the truth !” Let the Pulpit stand, the great instrument, under God, for the regeneration of the world ! Let Historical Christianity continue to be preached, in its various aspects, its manifold relations and bearings, and its infinite applications to the duties, temptations and trials of life. Let it be thoroughly pondered, and faithfully administered, and it will be found not a dead letter, but a living and life-giving spirit. It will be found not a stagnant pool, but a springhead, welling forth sparkling and refreshing waters. Its facts and statements, its truths and doctrines, its precepts and motives, its promises and appeals, its consolations and hopes, will all be found suited to our nature, congenial

to our souls, adapted to us as frail, tempted, sinful, suffering beings. They will be found to impart all needed support in affliction, encouragement in duty, and moral power in the struggles and conflicts of our lot; and the religion of the book will be embraced as the religion of the heart and the life.

Above all, let Christ be preached; — not the Christ of theory, of imagination, or of philosophy — but the Christ of the New Testament, the Mediator, the Redeemer, the Saviour, the Son of God, the Advocate with the Father, the Light of the World. Let not the Christian minister fear that he shall insist on the person or the offices of Jesus with a noxious exaggeration. Let him not be afraid of being charged with uttering cant and fulsome panegyric when he dwells upon this glorious and still unexhausted theme. Let him not shrink from setting forth his mediatorial and intercessory offices, a ministry of reconciliation and love which it never entered into the heart of philosophy to conceive. Let him not be ashamed of subordinating his nature to Christ's nature and taking secondary knowledge of him. Let him not fail to set him forth as an object of imitation, an example to be followed. Let the Christ of History be preached with faith, and force, and fervor, and he will be formed within, be reproduced in the soul, and become the Christ of Consciousness and the Christ of Faith. And what God by his spirit shall thus join together, let no man put asunder.

NOTES.

I. Pages 22, 23. INFLUENCE OF PHILOSOPHY ON RELIGION.

The statements contained in these two pages will probably not be disputed. It may be well, however, to mention some of the principal authorities on which I rely in support of them.

I. *On the influence of the later Platonists*, see Mosheim, *De turbatâ per recentiores Platonicos Ecclesiâ, Commentatio*; Brucker, *Historia Critica Philosophiæ*, III. 337 — 349; Degerando, *Histoire Comparée des Systèmes de la Philosophie*, IV., 1; Tennemann, *Manual of the History of Philosophy*, § 226; Gieseler, *Ecclesiastical History*, I., 100, 112, 137. — II. *On the influence of Manichæism on Augustin's theology*, see Beausobre, *Histoire de Manichée et du Manichéisme*, Liv. IV., chs. 4 et 5; Dupin, *Nouvelle Bibliothèque des Auteurs Ecclésiastiques*, III., 248; Mosheim, *De Rebus Christianorum ante Constantinum Magnum*, 728 — 910; C. C. Sandius, *Nucleus Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ*, 125; Priestley, *History of Early Opinions*, IV., 293, and *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, I., 167, 172; Tennemann, § 232; Gieseler, I., 222. — III. *On the influence of Aristotle on the Scholastic Theology*, see Brucker, III., 709; Degerando, IV., 235; Tennemann, § 262; Gieseler, II., 331. — IV. *On the influence of Philosophy on the French Revolution*, see the Baron de Grimm's *Correspondence*, passim; Lacretelle, *Histoire de France pendant le dix-huitième siècle*, III., 1 — 154; Alison's *History of the French Revolution*, I., 71, 74; Tennemann, § 366; Burke's *Reflections*, Works V., 171, 207; London ed. 1815; Walter Scott's second chapter of his *Introduction to the Life of Napoleon Buonaparte*. It is not a little remarkable that Madame de Staël, Thiers, Mignet, and Carlyle, all omit this unquestionable element of the Revolution. — V. *On the influence of German metaphysics in producing the infidelity and pantheism of the present day*, see Tennemann, § 387 and 394; and the next Note.

II. Page 23. GERMAN PHILOSOPHY.

Since this Discourse was delivered, I have met with a very thorough and able article in the *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, for January, 1840, which gives a lucid and interesting account of the state, character and practical effects of metaphysical speculation in Germany

at the present time. It is understood that this article and a previous one on the nature of the prevalent system of German theology and philosophy, which appeared in the same periodical in January, 1839, will soon be published in a pamphlet in this city. They are deserving the perusal of every one who wishes to understand the subject. The following are a few of the closing remarks of the article first named.

"It is well known to all who have paid the least attention to the subject, that the prevalent system of philosophy in Germany is that of Hegel; and that this system has, to a remarkable degree, diffused itself among all classes of educated men. It is not confined to reclusive professors or speculative theologians, but finds its warmest advocates among statesmen and men of the world. It has its poets, its popular as well as its scientific journals. It is, in short, the form in which the German mind now exists and exhibits itself to surrounding nations, just as much as Deism or Atheism was characteristic of France during the reign of terror. * * The general characteristic of this school is pantheism."—p. 46.

"Strange as it may seem, when we look at this system in its true character, it undoubtedly has already prevailed to a great extent in Germany, and is making some progress in France, England, and our own country. Its true nature is disguised in obscure philosophical language, which many use without understanding, until it comes at last to be the expression of their real opinions. We have evidence enough that this pantheistic philosophy has set its cloven foot in America."—p. 65.

"Though, for the reasons stated above, we think it not unlikely that this system will make a certain degree of progress in our country, we have no fear of its ever prevailing, either here or in England, as it does in Germany. Apart from the power of true religion, which is our only real safeguard against the most extravagant forms of error, there are two obstacles to the prevalence of these doctrines among Englishmen, or their descendants. They do not suit our national character. A sanity of intellect, an incapacity to see wonders in nonsense, is the leading trait of the English mind. The Germans can believe any thing. Animal magnetism is for them as one of the exact sciences. What suits the Germans, therefore, does not suit us."—p. 69.

"It is not however only or chiefly on this want of adaptation of the German mysticism to the sane English mind, that we would rely to counteract the new philosophy; it is the influence of the Bible on all our modes of thinking. We believe in God the Father, the Maker of heaven and earth. We must have a God who can hear prayer. In Germany, the educated classes, little in the habit of attending church, have for generations felt comparatively little of the power of the Bible. There was no settled idea of a personal God, such as is visible in every page of the Scriptures, engraven on their hearts. They were therefore prepared for speculations which destroyed his very nature, and were content with a blind instinctive power, productive of all changes, and struggling at last into intelligence in the human race. Such a God may do for a people who have been first steeped in infidelity for generations; but not for those who have been taught, with their first lisplings, to say, Our Father who art in heaven. The grand danger is, that this deadly poison will be introduced under false labels; that this atheism,

enveloped in the scarcely intelligent formulas of the new philosophy, may be regarded as profound wisdom, and thus pass from mouth to mouth without being understood, until it becomes familiar and accredited. This process is going on before our eyes. * * We feel it to be a solemn duty to warn our readers, and in our measure, the public, against this German atheism. * * No one will deny that the Hegelian doctrines, as exhibited above, is atheism in its worst form; and all who will read the works of Cousin, may soon satisfy themselves that his system, as far as he has a system, is, as to the main point, identical with that of Hegel."—p. 70.

III. Page 25. WORDS — WORDS — WORDS.

"When the learned Casaubon visited for the first time the Sorbonne, his pompous Cicerone exclaimed, 'Here, Sir, is a court which for five hundred years has been the scene of incessant disputations!' 'Eh bien! et qu'a-t-on donc prouvé?' demanded the acute Genevese."

IV. Page 26. EXPERIMENTAL.

I use the word *experimental* in the large sense which is claimed for it by Dugald Stewart and Sir James Mackintosh, as comprehending the knowledge which flows from *observation* as well as that which is obtained from *experiment*. According to the former "the *experimental* or inductive philosophy of the human mind denotes those speculations concerning mind, which, rejecting all hypothetical theories, rest solely on phenomena for which we have the evidence of consciousness."—*Stewart's Works*, Vol. vii. p. 360, and *Edinburgh Review*, Vol. xxxvi. p. 240.

V. Page 26. SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON.

The name of Sir WILLIAM HAMILTON will probably not be so familiar to some into whose hands this pamphlet may fall as those of the distinguished men with whom I have associated him. To such I would say that he is not only one of the most learned and accomplished men of the age, but one of its most acute thinkers and clear-headed reasoners. A writer among ourselves speaks of him and Sir James Mackintosh as "two individuals whose judgment is entitled to more respect on this subject [French philosophy] than any writer in the English language who has recently manifested an interest in philosophical studies." Cousin speaks of him as "a Scotch critic whose erudition equals his sagacity." Among his able contributions to the pages of the *Edinburgh Review* there is an article on Cousin's Philosophy, in the course of which he takes occasion to speak very plainly of the character and tendency of the late German and French systems of philosophy. His competency to pass a critical judgment in the case will not be disputed, nor will his fairness, candor or

impartiality be called in question. The following passages are selected from that article. The whole should be read by those who can have access to it.

"Kant had annihilated the older metaphysic ; but the germ of a more visionary doctrine of the absolute, than any of those he had refuted, was contained in the bosom of his own philosophy. He had slain the body, but had not exorcised the spectre of the absolute ; and this spectre has continued to haunt the schools of Germany even to the present day. The philosophers were not content to abandon their metaphysic ; to limit philosophy to an observation of phenomena, and to the generalization of these phenomena into laws. The theories of Bouterwek, (in his earlier works,) of Bardili, of Reinhold, of Fichte, of Schelling, of Hegel, are so many endeavours, of greater or less ability, to fix the absolute as a positive in knowledge ; but the absolute, like the water in the sieves of the Danaides, has always hitherto run through as a negative into the abyss of nothing." — p. 207.

"Schelling contends that there is a capacity of knowledge above consciousness, and higher than the understanding, and that this knowledge is competent to human reason, as identical with the absolute itself. In this act of knowledge, which, after Fichte, Schelling calls the Intellectual Intuition, there exists no distinction of subject and object, — no contrast of knowledge and existence, — all difference is lost in absolute indifference, — all plurality in absolute unity. The intuition itself — reason — and the absolute — are identical. The absolute exists only as known by reason, and reason knows only as being itself the absolute." — p. 208.

"If we compare the philosophy of Cousin with the philosophy of Schelling, we at once perceive that the former is a disciple, though not a servile disciple, of the latter." — p. 209.

"After the tenor of our previous observations, it is needless to say that we regard M. Cousin's attempt to establish a general peace among philosophers, by the promulgation of his Eclectic Theory, as a signal failure. But though no converts to his philosophy, and viewing with regret what we must regard as the misapplication of his distinguished talents, we cannot disown a strong feeling of interest and admiration for those qualities, even in their excess, which have betrayed him, with so many other aspiring philosophers, into a pursuit which could end only in disappointment — we mean his love of truth, and his reliance on the powers of man. Not to despair of philosophy is a 'last infirmity of noble minds.' The stronger the intellect, the stronger the confidence in its force : the more ardent the appetite for knowledge, the less are we prepared to canvass the uncertainty of the fruition. 'The wish is parent to the thought.' Loath to admit that our science is at best the reflection of a reality we cannot know, we strive to penetrate to existence in itself ; and what we have labored intensely to attain, we at last fondly believe we have accomplished. But, like Ixion, we embrace a cloud for a divinity. Conscious only of limitation, we think to comprehend the infinite, and dream of establishing our human science on an identity with the omniscient God. It is this powerful tendency of the most vigorous minds to transcend the sphere of our faculties, that makes a 'learned ignorance' the most difficult acquirement of knowledge. In the words of a forgotten, but acute philosopher, — *magna, immo maxima, pars sapientiæ, est quædam æquo animo nescire velle.*" — Edinburgh Review, Vol. 50.

CHARGE,

BY

REV. EZRA S. GANNETT.

CHRISTIAN BROTHER,

The Council convened for your induction into the ministry having confirmed the choice which you had made in regard to these exercises, it is by their direction as well as by your request, that I now deliver the Charge which long usage has made a part of the services on occasions like the present. If I spoke in my own name, I should hesitate to use the language of authority, or even of counsel; words of sympathy would be all that I should address to you. Or if I regarded myself only as the organ of these ministers and delegates and of the churches which they represent, I might avoid a tone which savors not of the equality that should exist among those who "call no man master." But I deem it not arrogant to assume, that in this instance he who speaks represents higher interests than are signified by any opinions or customs of men. It is my office to speak to you in behalf of those great interests to which you have now been consecrated, alike by self-dedication and by the symbols of an outward service. In the name, therefore, of the Church and the Gospel of Christ, in the name of truth, humanity, and religion, I charge you to be faithful to the ministry which you have undertaken. This charge I

give you before God, the righteous Judge, who will one day call you to render an account of the stewardship upon which you have entered, and before the immortal beings whose experience concerning your labors among them will be the foundation of the judgment of Heaven. I charge you, the pastor of this church and society, to be faithful to your ministry from this time until the hour when you shall lay down the trust which you have now assumed, and shall quit the sphere of responsibility to which you have been introduced.

That you may be faithful to this ministry, you must think of it as it deserves. Esteem it a privilege to be clothed with its functions. Account it an honor to bear its burthens. Regard this as the highest service to which you could be called. You could have chosen none more excellent in its character, none more noble in its design, none more beneficent or glorious in its results. The ministry of the Christian Church began with the Son of God, and was delivered by him into the hands of them whose names shine in the world's history with a lustre which dims the splendors of earthly greatness. To tread in the steps of Jesus, not only in the exhibition of personal character, but in the discharge of official duty, invests one with more dignity than the purple or the crown. My brother, be not ashamed of your profession. Magnify it and rejoice in it.

You are a *minister*. Regard the meaning of the word. Your office is *to serve*. Your life is henceforth to be a life of service. You must seek the good of others and make yourself their minister for Christ's sake, even as he came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister." And therefore is your office honorable, because he whose eye penetrated through all delusions to the everlasting reality of things has said, "If any one among you would be greatest, let him be your servant." Serve this people, my brother, with all diligence and humility. And let them see, and let others

see, that to be a servant is more honorable than to bear the sceptre or the sword.

There are three departments of ministerial duty; you must be faithful in your pulpit—faithful among your people—faithful in your own soul. Your preaching, your conversation, your daily life must show you to be the faithful minister.

In the pulpit it will be your office to guide the devotions of your people, and to instruct them in the way of life. Consider then that you have here a sacred function. Enter not the pulpit with any other than the highest purposes. Prepare your mind for the services of the hour by prayer and meditation. Come not hither to give entertainment, to win applause, or to discharge a professional task. That you may clear your conscience in this matter, let me direct you to the end which you must keep in view, and the means which you must use for this end. The end which you must contemplate in all your ministrations here is the culture of the human soul. To the soul must you address yourself—to the spiritual and immortal nature of man. Preach to the *souls* of your hearers—preach with the single view of making them partakers of a Divine life. In every one of the congregation, under whatever outward appearance, behold the elements of a perfection which you must help him to understand and unfold, and do not account yourself to have done any thing as you ought unless you have at least tried to make him a better man. Come hither Sunday after Sunday with just the same purpose—to aid these people in freeing, exalting, sanctifying, perfecting themselves. Fear not that by incessant contemplation you will exhaust the vitality of this purpose. The more you ponder the great idea which must ever be uppermost in your mind, the more sublime, comprehensive, inexhaustible will it seem to you. Penetrate the meaning of the common words of religious instruction—least understood

because most used — *man, duty, God*. The soul, I repeat, comprehend its nature, condition, destiny; — capable of an exaltation which mocks the power of language; sunk often into a state of the most pitiable debasement, and still more often wrapped in a lethargy whose fatal slumber you must dissolve; with an endless progress before it, whose character the influences it shall here acknowledge must affect, and may forever determine. To save this soul from ruin, to redeem it from thralldom, to bring it to God, to prepare it for heaven, is your work; and if you set before yourself any other design than this, I say to you, my brother, you are not fit for the ministry. Go elsewhere, and get your bread. Go elsewhere, and work for money, for honor, for fame. But take not another step beyond the threshold of the sacred office.

The instrument which you must use in affecting the souls of men is Christian truth. You are ordained to be a *Christian* minister. Preach, therefore, Christianity. Preach not philosophy, preach not the maxims of a conventional morality, preach not human folly or human wisdom; preach Christianity. Preach Christ — Christ, the Son of God, and the Saviour of men — Christ crucified, yet risen — Christ the sufferer, but the Master — Christ the image of God, and the model for man. Make the New Testament your text-book; not as do some, merely for the sake of getting a text, but that you may draw thence your doctrine and persuasion. Make Jesus your study and the source of your inspiration. Come to this people with his religion on your tongue and in your heart. Preach plainly, with the aim of being understood, and not as if this were the last thing you cared about. Utter the truth, be it popular or unpopular, let it strike where it may, wound though it shall. Let me in this connexion remind you of two indispensable conditions, alike of fidelity and of success in your office.

First, be honest. Preach nothing which you do not believe. Give forth your own convictions. Be as little of the parrot as of the hypocrite. Say what you think. Preach the Christianity which you find in the Bible — not what some one else, or all others, have said is there. The very first requisite in a minister is integrity of soul. Let your sermons, and, oh! for conscience' and for the altar's sake, let your prayers, be the expression of your own mind. Borrow nothing from another for the sake of filling up or filling out. Make all that you repeat your own by the concurrence and sympathy of your own mind, before you let it pass your lips. If it were possible, I would say, let your discourse be as close a copy of your convictions as if the light of truth, like the action of the sun on the material surface, could transfer thither each line and point. Dread every form and degree of dishonesty.

Next, be earnest. Preach as if you meant to effect something. Let it appear, and let it appear because it is the fact, that you would rather die than not promote the cause for which Jesus expired on the cross. To be earnest, you need not be loud nor declamatory nor extravagant. Earnestness is calm, patient, deep in its tones, tender in its entreaties, and irresistible in its perseverance. Let your people feel at the close of each Lord's day, and let your own conscience bear witness, that to you may be applied the words which the devoted leader of Israel adopted respecting himself, — "See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil." And while your bosom, laboring under the emotions of anxiety and love, shall relieve itself in fervent supplications for them whose everlasting welfare is dear to you as your own, or in counsel which shall seem as if it were spoken because it could not be withheld, they will be touched, subdued, saved, — the trophies of your single-hearted energy.

A large part of your ministerial engagements will lie

without the walls of this church. Be faithful among your people, as you go from house to house, or as you receive them within your own doors. Let not opportunities of usefulness pass unheeded; but rather seek, and create such opportunities. Think not that when you put off that gown, you put off the minister. You have this day taken up a character, which you may never put off while you hold the connexion now formed between you and your people. What you are on the first day of the week, you must be through its other days—the spiritual teacher and friend. The position of this society and the habits of our community will afford you great facilities for discharging parochial labor. On the one hand, belonging to a more compact settlement than is found in our villages, but on the other, not lost from observation in the thicket of human life, as is the case with the members of congregations in a great metropolis like London, the people of your charge are easily found and easily visited. They will expect, and therefore be prepared to receive, from you those offices of pastoral fidelity which the habits of New England have associated with the relation of a clergyman. Let them not be disappointed. Respond to the confidence, which they will proffer, with an open sympathy. Let them know you in their domestic circles, and implant in their hearts those sentiments of friendship which will give peculiar efficacy to your preaching. It comes within the province of another to remind you of the *pleasures* of this familiar intercourse; I speak of it as a part of your *duty*. And in its performance I charge you to preserve the same qualities of sincerity and earnestness which you should exhibit in the pulpit; while you keep in mind the same object—the good of souls, and employ the same instrument—Christian truth. Whether you enter the house which the Divine Providence has made the home of contentment or delight, to rejoice with them that rejoice, or the dwelling into which sorrow has called

your presence, to mourn with them that mourn; whether you converse with the sick, or pray with the dying; whether it be the young or the old, the man of business, or she whose sphere of action is coincident with her domestic life, whom you address; whether you are sought with the anxious cry for help, or must make your own approach to the soul's experience through the avenues which a delicate but faithful spirit of friendship shall discover;—let all your communications bear the character of ministerial fidelity. Deceive no one, mislead no one, neglect no one; and let no one have occasion to say, — my soul thirsteth for the waters of salvation, but he to whom I look for guidance will not lead me to the springs whence they flow.

I cannot but caution you against two dangers to which you will be exposed under this department of duty. Beware lest you mistake—or rather, for this is more to be feared—lest by your silence you should seem to mistake a worldly propriety and a respect for religious institutions for Christian character. I do not know any danger against which it is more necessary for us to guard ourselves. Such is the state of society among us, that the rich and respectable, men of influence and consideration, almost of course manifest a sense of the value of Christianity by the support they give to public worship, and the respect they pay to the decorum of life. Yet who does not know that among the possessors of wealth and influence sin finds its strong-holds, where though it sit in concealment, it sits in scorn of God's authority and Christ's pity? Shall the Christian minister be the only one who appears ignorant of a fact with which all the rest of the world are familiar? My brother, admonish the sinner, whether you find him in a cellar, or he invite you to his luxurious table. Let not the fear of man stand between you and your duty. Deliver your own soul from the guilt of negligence, if you cannot save the souls of others from spiritual death.

The other danger which I would suggest, comes from an opposite quarter. The intimacy of regard between the clergyman and those of his flock with whom sympathies of character, or circumstances, may lead him to have the most frequent intercourse, often, I fear, begets a neglect of that spiritual communion which it should be his wish to cultivate with all his people. Accustomed to meet at short intervals for the exchange of the usual courtesies and privileges of friendship, these gradually absorb the time which they spend together. Inquiries and conversation upon topics of mutual interest which belong to this world exclude the mention of the higher realities of the unseen life; and often it is true, I believe, that the minister holds the least religious conversation with those families whom he most frequently visits. My brother, anticipate and avoid this sad result. Let not affection blind your judgment nor silence your tongue. Watch for the souls of them whom you love.

I can speak but briefly of your private habits. Over these must reign the same spirit of fidelity as over your public ministrations and your social intercourse. Both for your own sake, and for the sake of your people, you must maintain the Christian character in the strictness of self-denial and the beauty of holiness. For your own sake, because it is shameful to exhort others to keep the path of righteousness while we do not walk in it ourselves, and also because personal integrity is a great help to professional success. For their sakes, because they will look to you for an illustration of the practice which you urge upon them. It is a reasonable expectation of theirs, that you will go before them in the way which leadeth to eternal life, strait and narrow as you declare to them that it is, and therefore there being the more need that you should give them all the assistance in your power. Let them not suspect you of having one religion for them, and another for yourself, or one which chameleon-like wears a different

hue in society and in retirement. Remember the Apostolic counsel, — “Let no man despise thy youth ; but be thou an example to the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity,” “in all things showing thyself a pattern of good works.” Suffer not yourself to be diverted from the spiritual interests of the ministry by literary pursuits. You need not starve either the intellect or the taste, because it has become your business to feed others as well as yourself with the bread of life that cometh down from Heaven. On the contrary, the stronger your intellect and the healthier your taste, the greater will be your ability to discriminate both as to the nature of Divine truth, and the methods of its communication to others. But do not let a love of letters or of science obtain too great command of your hours. Spend much time among your books, and yet more among your thoughts, but let the fruit of your studies be seen in the increased richness and appropriateness of your services at the altar and in the pulpit. Let one aim run through your private, as through your public life — to make yourself, in the highest sense of the word, *useful* to this people who have chosen you to be over them in the Lord. Watch over the sanctuary of your inmost consciousness, and keep it from the pollution of evil motive and corrupt desire. Unlike the Jewish high priest, enter the most holy place of the temple of God, “which temple you are,” daily, and preserve in it the law of the Lord, written upon the “fleshy tables of the heart.” Let not the frequency of those social acts of devotion, to which you will be called, interrupt the habit or chill the fervor of your secret worship. In some respects, my brother, the duties of the clerical profession are suited to impose upon its incumbents the necessity of a wakeful care lest they omit the duties of personal piety. Apprehend and defeat any influence which might issue in such evil. Let the progress of time, as it shall cement the union this day celebrated, mature your excellencies; and

the discipline of life, as it shall call for various exhibitions of faith, be used by you as a means of more clearly showing the value of religious convictions.

Take the counsels which have now been given you, Christian brother, as hints for your future course. Still learn not of us, learn not of man. Learn of the Founder and Pattern of the Christian ministry. We charge you to be faithful. But a higher voice than ours speaks through the solemnities of this day. Christ charges you to be faithful in the midst of his Church. The Master's eye is upon you ; be the Master's spirit within you.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

BY

REV. SAMUEL OSGOOD.

I KNOW not, my brother, but that I should more suitably discharge the office entrusted to me, were I to give you the hand of fellowship, and let this simple and silent token assure you of the sympathy and congratulation of the assembled churches. When I look upon this, the altar of my earliest worship, when I see among this listening throng so many familiar, friendly faces, when I think in whose place, it is, I now stand, when to the solemnities of this occasion, so touching in themselves, so many remembrances of the past are added, I utterly despair of saying any thing, that shall express the feelings, with which I greet you, a personal friend, upon your entrance to the sacred office. But speak to you I must, and I will try to speak out the plain language of nature.

Take this hand of fellowship, my brother, in token of our sympathy and congratulation. What more fitting emblem of the union, that binds the servants of Christ! Claiming no arbitrary sway, exacting no servile homage, we give you the hand of brotherhood, and take you to ourselves. May the prayer of the Saviour for his Church be granted in us, that we may all be one, even as he and the Father are one.

The hand, extended to you in brotherhood, assures you

of our congratulation. Welcome to the sacred office, upon which you now enter. I may well greet you upon this occasion. The profession, whose duties you now assume, was your early choice. Your thoughts and studies have long been directed towards it. In foreign lands and amid the luxuries and allurements, which have corrupted the tastes of so many, who have been destined to the clerical profession, you have kept your purpose unshaken, you have pursued the studies of your chosen calling, and now, true to the institutions of your own New England, true to the faith of our fathers, you bow, a minister of God at this altar, and hear the greeting, which cheers you to your work.

Welcome to the sacred office — to its duties, its trials, its joys !

Of its duties, you have had some experience, although not of them all. Already student of Theology and preacher of the Word, you now become pastor of this people, minister of this Church. A new career thus opens before you. Henceforth study will have new and closer aims, labor will have fresh motives, the pulpit will impart warmer inspiration, and promise richer rewards. You will live among a people, who will be ready to look to you, as a dear friend and worthy exemplar ; you will minister to a congregation, who will listen to you for the truth. Welcome to this field of responsibility, labor, reward !

Welcome to its trials ! No greeting can honor you more. Welcome to the trials of the Christian Ministry ! Many such you will have. Trial is the lot of man, and he can by no means hope to be exempt, who undertakes the ministry of the Cross. You will be sorely tried in your search after truth and in your strivings to do justice to the convictions of your soul. Happy, my brother, if the intellect, often baffled, shall bow in pious homage to the source of all truth and seeing now through a glass darkly, you shall hope one day to see face to face. Happy, if unable to bring the

truths of heaven down to the level of mortals, your understanding shall kneel before lights higher than its own, as the stars of the firmament are higher than the earth. You will be often disappointed, because you cannot move men to follow your counsels, and seek their own highest good. You will experience their caprices; for what man has been exempt from such experience? Happy, if you have a rule of action independent of human caprice. Happy, if you steer your bark by the light, that no clouds can darken, no winds can shake, nor waves quench. You shall reach the haven in safety, and pleasant will be the memory of the perils, that are past. That such your career may be, my prayer is, while I welcome you to the trials of the Christian Ministry. Upward and onward, beyond and above all obstacles, a brave soul ever tends. Gathering strength from very difficulties, he rises above them and by them, as the bird tends heavenward by the very air, that beats against her wings. Welcome to the trials of the life, that now opens before you !

But it is not all trial, nor is this an occasion of sadness, touching and overwhelming, though its solemnities may be. Our Master was indeed the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But blessed be his name, he teaches us to draw comfort from sorrows, and find joys in grief. The Ministry of Christ is no melancholy office. He, who deems it such, degrades it, and knows not the peace, that passeth understanding. I greet you upon your entrance to the highest joys of the sacred office.

I need not invite you to dwell in detail upon the blessings, that follow the Christian scholar in his thoughts and studies, nor tell you of the rich field open to your researches. No path of science, no garden of beauty, no hall of the arts, no realm of learning, which the Christian seeker may not enter, and from which he may not gather treasures to enrich the lessons of his office. History, Poetry, Eloquence, Phi-

losophy, the Science of Nature and the Science of the Soul all have their offerings for the shrine of religion, all may gather reverently around faith, and bring to Jesus offerings far richer, than the Magi laid at the feet of the young child. Let us rejoice, that the age is free, and we students of divine truth are not restricted to any one range of literature, any single province of God's creation, in which to learn his will and see his love. Joy enough to be able to study Christ in all his fulness, in history and in the soul, in the letter and in the spirit! History and the soul, the letter and the spirit agree in one, and proclaim him Lord, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever! All witnesses thus accordant, what God hath joined, let not man profanely put asunder. But why dwell upon the joys of the free student of Christianity. These you have experienced, while others are yet in store.

Welcome to the pleasures of the pastoral office—to the delight of associating with your people, not with selfish aims, not to interchange worldly feelings, nor to be rebuked by harsh passions, but to be the friend and brother of all. Enjoy the pastoral office. Never, my brother, deem its humblest duties drudgery. The whole office is drudgery to some, I grieve to say it, but it is because they are drudges, and undertake the labors of the profession in a servile spirit. The fault is in them and not in the office. They degrade into drudgery one of the noblest human labors, and are drudges still, though laboring in a work, sanctified by the Son of Man, just as the degraded slave is a slave still, although his chains are broken, and he walks among the free. The true idea of the pastoral office will dignify, and transfigure its lowliest labors. May you, my brother, be pervaded by this idea, and honor your work. Despise none of your flock. Enjoy the society of all, whether it be among the affluent and learned, or the less favored by fortune and science. Bear the lamp of faith to the dark abode of affliction, and it shall be brighter, than the hall of gay revelry.

Revere the Pearl of Great Price above all jewels, and you will see a treasure in the cottage of the widow and the orphan, that shall surpass the wealth of the proud. Respect the wisdom, that is wise to salvation, above all scholastic lore, and you will not seldom find sages among those, whom learning has little favored with its honors, and fame never celebrated by her praises. Enjoy the society of the people of your charge.

Welcome to the privileges of the pulpit ! It is a happy thing to utter one's thought and feelings to a friend or little company of friends, even upon the trifles of the passing day. The deeper feelings crave utterance and sympathy still more. Happy the office, which makes the highest privilege a duty, and bids the soul utter itself upon the most momentous of all subjects, and to no cold and unwilling listener, but a ready audience prepared to receive every wise thought, and respond to every true feeling. Welcome to *this* pulpit ! It is privileged far beyond many altars of worship. To the minds of this people, the pulpit, in which we stand, is more than wood and tapestry. It is graven over with oracles of wisdom, it is imbued with noble sentiments, it is fragrant with tender and holy affections. Enjoy, my brother, the privilege of standing here, and put away all false fears. Let the place itself be a priceless Mentor. If you speak time-serving, man-pleasing words, this altar will be a rebuke to you in the minds of this congregation, and its glory will fade in their view, as the ruby of Amurath turned pale, when he was false to his trust. Be true, and the influences of this place will work with you. Its wise oracles, noble sentiments, holy affections, will give point and force to your counsels, beauty and inspiration to your appeals. Welcome to this pulpit ! One says it, who has derived no feeble influences from its ministrations. May it be your joy and throne !

My brother, I must close these words of greeting ; yet one

thought more must be uttered. While as a personal friend, and on behalf of the council of churches, I give you and through you to this Church the hand of fellowship, I cannot but consider myself as called to address you in another relation. Long, and from earliest youth a member of this religious society, I may assume in a manner to be its representative, to greet you on their behalf, as the pastor of their choice. When a boy, coming from Sabbath to Sabbath to listen to the teachings of a revered pastor, little did I expect ever to stand in this place as a minister, and give the hand of greeting to a young brother in the pastoral office. This is now your home, which long has been mine. If the place of one's birth is dear, whether in valley or on mountain, far dearer the shrine, which has been the soul's true birth-place, and where the spirit has been ushered into the light of true day. How many thoughts, what throngs of remembrances rise up at this time. The men and scenes of other days pass along in solemn procession. Among them stands the mild and serious form of the first pastor of this Church. Gentle spirit!

None knew thee, but to love thee,
None named thee, but to praise !

Much loved and early lost, he was not permitted to minister long at this altar. The voice, that greeted his entrance upon the sacred office, as I now greet you, my brother, in a few short months, said the funeral office over his remains. Longer may your days be, and your sphere of usefulness more extended.

But why call up these forms from the past? Among them there are many shapes of the departed, whose memory will call forth tears. Nor shall I try to speak of him, whom you now succeed, in the ministry of this people? If a son may speak the praises of a father in loud and public eulogy, then may I, in presence of this audience, eulogize

him, who has been to me a father. I may not do it. Let me leave speaking now.

Welcome, my brother, to the charge of this people. Receive the young men as brethren. One from among them now gives you the brother's hand. May they with you bear the Ark of God in company, and guard it piously from every hostile arm and every polluting stain. Welcome, my brother, to your charge. May the God of all grace bless you and me, this people and his Church throughout the world.

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE,

BY

REV. DR. WALKER.

BRETHREN OF THIS CONGREGATION :

As your minister has been reminded of the relation which he sustains to you, it has been thought proper that you should be reminded of the relation which you sustain to your minister ; and the office of doing it has been assigned to me.

I am admonished, however, in the outset, that what I say must be said in a few words. Instead, therefore, of attempting to run over all the topics naturally suggested in this connection, I will limit myself to three, and to these chiefly, as they are affected by the greater diffusion of intelligence in the community, by which the present age is so honorably distinguished.

And, first, of the estimate proper to be entertained, in the existing state of things, of the sacred office in itself considered. Once, if a man was only a minister, that was enough. That circumstance alone admitted him to a position in society, and to an influence in society, often entirely disproportionate to his claims in other respects. But times have changed. Now a minister must look more to himself, and less to his office, even for power to do good. That ministers, as a body, have special ground for complaint or dissat-

isfaction on this account, I do not say. What has happened to them is only what has happened, at least in a degree, to all the liberal professions, as they are sometimes called, and to the educated classes generally. If ministers, as such, are less thought of now than formerly, the same is also true of lawyers and physicians, of magistrates and schoolmasters. And the reason also is the same. The distinction, whether social or intellectual, existing between the privileged classes, as they were once regarded, and the mass of society, is growing less and less every day. I know how easy it is to exaggerate the extent to which the diffusion of knowledge has actually been carried in communities the most favored in this respect. Still it is impossible to shut our eyes on the fact, that the multiplication of the means and facilities of education and general intelligence has had the effect to enlarge the number of those, who are competent to make up an independent judgment on most subjects. Of course, even in matters pertaining to religion, ministers as a body are not relied upon so entirely or so implicitly as they once were ; and so far as this is really the result of more light, and more mental freedom and activity, I believe that ministers are among the first to welcome the change.

But what follows? Not surely that an order of men set apart for the religious instruction of the community, and educated for that express purpose, can be dispensed with. Because men are now expected to make up an opinion of their own on contested points of faith, it does not follow that they must not first be furnished with the materials for making up such an opinion ; but it does follow that the minister, whose business it is to furnish these materials, should have the requisite learning and time. Besides, it is not solely or chiefly in order to help persons to form correct opinions in religion that a minister is appointed. He is to be the leader of their devotions, and to act, in a thousand ways, on the moral and religious sentiments of his people

and the community ; and to do this acceptably and effectually becomes more and more difficult, as the standard of thought and taste is elevated and refined, and therefore calls not less and less, but more and more, for the exclusive appropriation of his energies. Among a rude and ignorant people, I can easily conceive that an uneducated minister, even though engaged in other employments, may be of much service ; but in the same proportion as intelligence finds its way among the mass of society, in that same proportion the demands upon him will be increased, and consequently the necessity will be increased, if he is to meet and satisfy these demands, that he should be a man qualified for his work, and devoted to it exclusively.

I am led to insist on this the more, because I suspect that a different impression as to the legitimate tendency of the times in regard to the importance and necessity of the Christian ministry is vaguely entertained in some minds. I am sure you will go along with me, brethren of this society, when I say, that a congregation can give no better evidence of a progress in knowledge and refinement, than in a growing disposition to appreciate and honor the faithful and laborious services of a devoted pastor. Look where you may, and I am sure you will find that the disparaging insinuations and poor jests, sometimes directed against the profession, never come from the truly wise, but may be traced in almost every instance to individuals who are either ignorant and vulgar themselves, or from sinister motives see fit to countenance the prejudices of the ignorant and vulgar. It is not because they partake of the enlightened and liberal spirit of the age, but because they are miserably deficient in that spirit, or utterly false to it. We do not ask that a black coat should be made to cover ignorance, indolence or crime ; but we do ask, and we do expect that sensible and thinking men will be able and ready to set a right value on moral and intellectual efforts made in their own behalf, or

in behalf of their children. Nay more; there is a delicacy, and generosity to be observed in relations of this nature, which we ask and confidently expect that men of delicate and generous minds will be quick to perceive, and eager to accord. We ask for no implicit faith; we ask for no blind or servile acquiescence. That, we know, is not less inconsistent with the position we have taken as liberal Christians, than with the temper of the times. Still we hold that just in proportion as men become truly liberal, and truly enlightened, they will see that there is a natural as well as conventional respect which is due to our very calling, as a sacred calling, and which is also essential to the full effect, even on themselves, of our best intended and best directed endeavors.

I have spoken of the manner in which the growing intelligence of the community should modify the estimate of the sacred office. Let us next inquire what effect the same cause should have on preaching, and on the manner in which it is listened to on the part of the people.

And here I begin by freely conceding, that to answer the great ends of the institution the character of preaching has been elevated, and must continue to be elevated more and more, in order to keep pace with the progress of mind in other respects. A dry statement and logical defence of the technical points in theology, a wearisome reiteration of truisms and common-places bolstered up by texts of scripture, a slight and superficial treatment of local and occasional topics, or of questions of outward decency, will not do. The wants of the soul must be sounded in their depths; the lurking places of sin must be laid bare; the word of God must be applied, not as a dead letter, but as a living spirit; and the realities of the spiritual world must be urged on men with that fullness and earnestness of faith, which will give them the force of realities. In all these respects the demands on the pulpit are higher and higher in proportion as

knowledge abounds; but then this knowledge brings along with it a capacity and a disposition to discriminate, to make allowances, and to try the actual by the standard of the actual, and not of the ideal. Accordingly you will find, that if ministers are reluctant to preach before any body, it is not before the truly enlightened, before men capable of the higher criticism here adverted to, but before men addicted to a small criticism, a criticism of phrases and words, a criticism of postures and gestures, a criticism of pronunciation, and the tying on of a cravat.

Now if it is the tendency of the age to produce greater enlargement and elevation of mind among all classes, we may hope that this small criticism will gradually disappear. And it is a result, allow me to say, which the community is more interested in bringing about than many seem to be aware; for of all external causes, I do not believe there is one which has done, or is doing so much, as this small criticism, to induce that dullness, which in preaching is the unpardonable sin. I do not ask you to abate one jot or tittle of your fair claims on your minister's zeal, labor and ability; but beware how you leave him to understand that he is to be tried and judged by his correctness, or want of correctness, in little things. On the contrary, let him know, let him feel, that any thing, that every thing, affecting manner alone, will be pardoned to a natural, earnest, effective utterance of what he conceives to be divine truth. He does not come here, you will remember, for a holiday exhibition of his gifts and graces; but to do a solemn work for which he is to answer to the Judge of quick and dead. Let him know, let him feel, that if he can convince your understandings, if he can move your hearts, if he can comfort you, if he can arrest you in a course of sin, it is all you want. Talk not about your petty rules and conventionalities until you have stifled what there is of originality and life in your minister, and then grumble because you have made him dull.

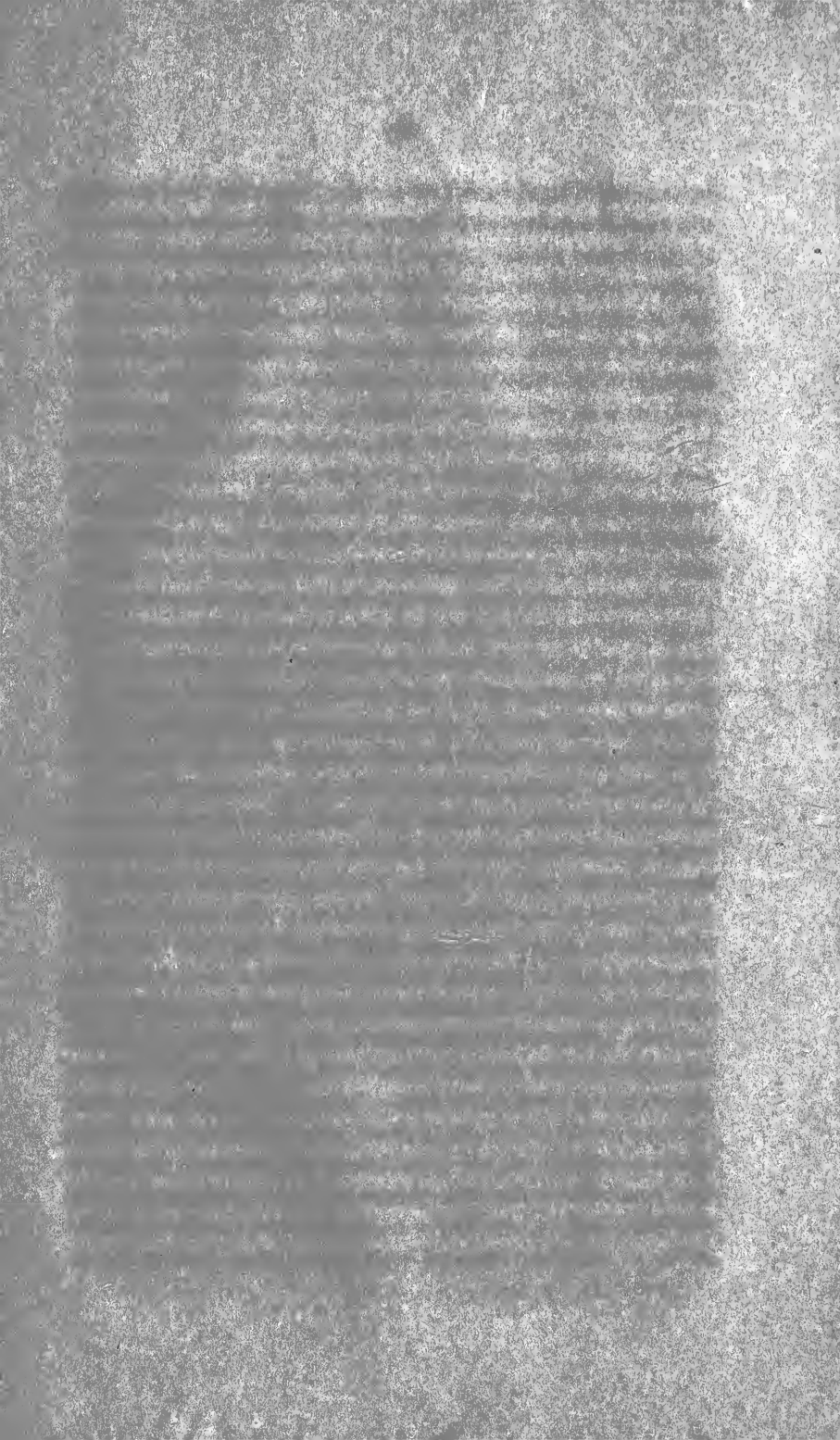
Brethren of this society, do as you have done. Do not try to make your minister somebody else; let him be *himself*. If you would have him speak to you as if he had a soul of his own, you must allow him to have a soul of his own.

One word, in conclusion, on the influence which the spread of intelligence among the people should have on the daily intercourse of the pastor with his flock. Perhaps you will say that he ought to confine himself more and more strictly to his profession, as, out of it, the number is increasing, even in his own congregation, of persons who are in a better condition than himself to know what is expedient and right. Be it so. Depend upon it there is no character in which your minister will more delight to visit you from house to house, than in that of a servant of Jesus Christ, and if he ever leaves your homes with sadness, it will be because you have not given him an opportunity to say a word for his Master. It is not for your entertainments, or for flattering or personal attentions of any kind, that he will visit you as a pastor; but it will be as your religious adviser and friend: and if you would brighten up his countenance, and send him back again to his labors with a new heart, let him see that these labors are not thrown away on a worldly and thoughtless people. I wish I could make you feel how much the obscurest members of a society can do to gladden the soul of their minister, and convince him that his labors are not in vain in the Lord, and so to strengthen his hands and encourage his heart for the time to come, merely by evincing a tender and solemn interest in his ministrations. In comparison with this the utmost that the merely rich and fashionable can do to make him happy in his situation is as dust in the balance.

Some of you, doubtless, will not stand so much in need of his help as others; this, however, only proves that you are so much more in a condition to help him. The attention which is now paid in all our congregations to the religious

instruction of the young, and the growing interest taken in the moral and religious condition of the poor, makes it imperative that serious and well informed laymen should co-operate with the clergy in this ministry of light and mercy. Give your minister your personal assistance; or if you will not give him that, give him a cheering word; at least give him the charity of your prayers. Remember that here, as every where, the ark of God must be upborne by hands at once feeble and frail; and dark will be the day when the humble, distrustful, fainting pastor cannot hope that his own prayers and tears will be seconded by the prayers and tears of every devout member of his flock, that he may not fail.

But why do I linger? Brethren, after yourselves and your pastor, I suppose there is none who can be expected to take any thing like the interest which I feel in the transactions of this day, and in the hopes they inspire. It is unnecessary to recur to my own experiences in the place which my brother now fills. Suffice it to say that I ask nothing better for him than the kindness, the generosity, the union, and the ready coöperation with which my poor services were always met, the grateful recollection of which will abide with me to my dying day. He comes not here to give himself up to ease and selfish gratification. He comes to labor, and if it be the will of God to die amidst his efforts, for your own best good, and that of your children, and in the service of Him who has made the Cross the symbol of love and power. I commend him, with my whole heart, to your confidence, as a spiritual guide and comforter; I commend him to your Christian sympathies; I commend him to your prayers. May the word which he preaches be mixed with faith in those who hear, and may he preach it under the influences of that grace which alone is sufficient for him, for you, and for us all.





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